

Elm Parish Council

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Minutes of the meeting of Elm Parish Council held remotely on Thursday 11 March 2021 commencing at 6.30pm

Meetings of the Parish Council are recorded by the Clerk to aid the Clerk with minute taking.
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Present: Cllrs, Brand, Butcher, Cotterell, Dalliday, Feaviour, Ferguson (Acting Chairman), Hopkin, Milham and Welbourne.
County Councillor Count, District Councillor Sutton, Parish Clerk; S England

A public forum did not take place as no members of the public were present at the meeting.

46/21	<p>At the request of Cllr Brand (elected Chairman) it was resolved to authorise Cllr Ferguson to undertake the role of Chairman for the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies for Absence Apologies and reasons for absence were reported for Councillors Griffiths and Vale; Council resolved to accept their reasons for absence.</p>
47/21	<p>Members Code of Conduct The Chair reminded members of the need to submit to the Monitoring Officer at Fenland District Council, via the Parish Clerk, any changes to the content of their Register of Member Interests forms.</p>
48/21	<p>To receive Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest regarding items on the agenda Members of the Council are subject to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interest) Regulations 2012. Members were reminded that all dispensation requests must be made to the Clerk prior to the meeting and that unless the member has obtained a dispensation, he or she cannot discuss or vote on the matter and must leave the room whilst the matter is being debated or voted on. Cllr Griffiths advised his interest in agenda items relating to tenders submitted by Idverde and confirmed that he would leave the meeting whilst these items were being considered. Cllr Butcher advised his interest in agenda item 69/21 and confirmed that he would leave the meeting whilst the item was being considered.</p> <p>To receive Declarations of Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or a Non-Pecuniary Interest No declarations submitted.</p>
49/21	<p>Minutes of Previous Meetings It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11 February 2021 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.</p>
50/21	<p>Membership of the Council The Clerk confirmed that she had been contacted by a person expressing their interest in being co-opted on to the Council. Item deferred to the April meeting when it was hoped that the candidate would be able to attend.</p>
51/21	<p>Police Matters</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. No report submitted from the local policing team.2. Other matters –<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The police had confirmed their support in principle for speed reduction measures detailed in the Local Highways Feasibility Summary Report.• Sgt Arnold had advised that incidents of quad bikes and mini-motorcycles accessing the Canal Towpath should be reported immediately, video or photographic evidence could be obtained where it was safe to do so. Members of the police team would visit the address of the alleged offenders to offer words of advice.• Criminal activity involving a Blue Audi and men wearing black balaclavas was being taken extremely seriously. Sightings of the individuals should be reported immediately as a 999 emergency.
52/21	<p>District and County Councillor Reports County Councillor Count reported;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apologies for not attending Parish Council meetings on a regular basis, however he confirmed that his assistance/support was always available via telephone/email contact.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County Council Budget included increases of 1.99% on Council Tax and 1% on Social Care. It had proved very difficult to balance the budgets and the legacy of the Covid pandemic was hard to predict particularly in the care home and educational sectors. • An additional £16m had been allocated to highways and £1.9m to flood attenuation. In recent years highways funding had taken a significant hit due to social care needs increasing from 60% to 80% of the total budget. Roads and pavements (including gully cleansing regimes) had suffered as a result. A new software system was being installed designed to fine tune responses to gully cleaning requests. • Cases of Covid-19 in Fenland had been identified as resistant to change when compared with other areas of the UK. It was believed that this was mainly due to the transport and housing arrangements of those working in food production plants. A visit from the Cabinet Office had confirmed that the action plan designed to address these issues was considered to be 'ahead of the game' and highly commended. • The Local Highways Improvement Panel meeting had taken place but it was not yet known if the application for speed calming measures between Elm and Friday Bridge had been approved for funding. • Funding had been approved for a new school on the west side of Wisbech, it was expected that the new facility would provide capacity at the existing Thomas Clarkson and Neale Wade schools. <p>District Councillor Sutton reported as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails and telephone calls had been received concerning the issue of litter and dog mess in Bar Drove. It was suggested that a dog waste bin could be installed at the Needham Bank end. Subject to be included on April agenda. • Hundred of Wisbech had arranged for the removal of around 200 tyres which had been dumped in Bar Drove, FDC was arranging collection. It was suggested that stricter rules applying to County waste sites was increasing the problem of fly tipping. • In respect of the 2021 Census, concern was raised for those who did not have access to an online service. It was confirmed that a paper copy of the form could be requested the Clerk and Cllr Ferguson advised that they would upload access information to Council's website and Facebook page. <p>7.15 pm Cllr Count left the meeting.</p>
53/21	<p>Clerk's Report</p> <p>The Clerk advised as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She had attended the Highways Improvement Panel meeting and presented a report stressing the need for speed reduction measures as identified in the Highways Officer Project Feasibility Summary. The Panel's decision would be received in due course. • Concerning caravans located on land adjacent to the official Newbridge Lane site, FDC Planning Enforcement had advised that an application for a transit site was being submitted. The situation would be monitored with a view to taking formal action if necessary. • Mr Causey, Fenland Tree Officer was obtaining permission from FDC in order to proceed with a safety inspection of the sycamore tree located in Halfpenny Lane. • FDC Elections Department had advised that they would not require use of the portacabin at Begdale for elections due to be held on 6th May. Improvements to health & safety at the premises would still proceed in order to mitigate risk moving forward. • It had been confirmed that remaining S106 funds held by FDC could be used towards the new fencing project at Tower Hall and also, new safety play surfacing at the Elm play park. • Newly installed play area signs had been vandalised shortly after installation. The contractor had replaced the sign at Elm, free of charge. The large sign at Friday Bridge had been re-manufactured in steel and would hopefully be less prone to damage. • Further damage had been caused to the perimeter fence of the pond at Grove Gardens. Cllr Griffiths had reported the matter to Kier and would follow this up if repairs were not carried out. • The surface of the pedestrian entrance gateway at Friday Bridge play area was in a particularly poor state, advice needed to be sought on how to make conditions safer, this would not be straight forward as the ground was on a significant slope. • Further to concerns raised regarding activities at Redmoor House, FDC Planning Compliance Officer had confirmed that planning should have been sought for the gate and fencing. An application had been submitted but was yet to be validated, the situation would be monitored. • The new dog waste bin had been installed (and would be maintained) mid-way along the Towpath by FEET. • Charges for the water supply at the Cemetery site were still be investigated. • Balfour Beatty was working its way through repair work to streetlights. • The Clerk was now authorised to operate online banking but Barclays had yet to authorise another signatory, this was being chased. • The following projects had either been started or were scheduled to start in the next few weeks – Tree works at The Leam, Tower Hall fencing, extension to burial facilities at Elm Cemetery. • The following work would be progressed in April – 2020-21 Accounts, Internal Audit, Playground Inspections.

54/21

Financial Matters

1. To note sums received since last meeting.

The Clerk advised receipts as follows; Burial fees £389.00, Cemetery Cottage rent £650.00, Barclays interest £0.75.

2. To approve expenditure for March 2021.

Schedule of accounts for payment 11 March 2021:

PAYEE	DETAIL	NET	VAT	TOTAL
Idverde Ltd	Cemetery Hedges	£2,640.00	£528.00	£3,168.00
Idverde Ltd	Grounds maint. Feb 21	£1,145.40	£229.08	£1,374.48
Chris Hennelly	Tree works	£2,690.00		£2,690.00
A1 Signs	Play area & Cemetery signs + posts & installation	£547.00	£109.40	£656.40
Glasdon	Dog waste bin (Towpath)	£271.98		£271.98
Mrs S England	Clerk's Salary	£1,470.52		£1,470.52
Mrs S England	Clerk's Expenses	£214.44	£5.33	£219.77
HMRC	Tax & NI - Month 12	£220.02		£220.02
Nest	Pension Contr. 6/3-5/4	£131.13		£131.13
		£9,330.49	£871.81	£10,202.30

Council resolved to approve the payments as scheduled for March 2021.

Chairman

3. To resolve to close Barclays Account ref. 53303632, transferring closing balance to Council's Business Current Account.
Item resolved.
4. To resolve on tenders received for improvements to Coldham lay-by.
The Clerk presented details of the four updated tenders (taking into account detailed specification for bollards) received from contractors. It was resolved to accept the tender submitted by Idverde Ltd, totalling £4850.00 + VAT.
5. To resolve on quotation received for installation of shuttering on a section of the cemetery dyke edge.
It was resolved to accept the quote submitted by Pro-edge Construction totalling £715.00 + VAT for installation of the shuttering; work to be completed alongside extension to burial facilities project.
6. To resolve on quotation received for electrical work to be undertaken at the portacabin.
The Clerk confirmed that she had attempted to seek additional quotations but had not received a response to her request. It was resolved to accept the quotation submitted by Mr Chapman totalling £1295.00 for works required in order to achieve compliancy with regulations at the portacabin.

55/21

Correspondence;**For comment/resolution;**

1. Email, F.E.E.T. (Friends of Elm & Emneth Towpath) – Request for assistance with creation of path running between the Elm and Collets Bridge entrance gates. Resolve appropriately.
Cllr Feaviour advised that the surface of the Canal Towpath was extremely muddy in places making it inaccessible for wheelchairs and pushchairs. A stone path (such as that installed at Rings End Nature Reserve) whilst expensive, would improve the walking surface for all users of the route. Council expressed their support for the proposals to be investigated further, suggesting that funding sources could include The Lottery and Wind Farm. Moving forward, Cllr Feaviour advised that he would liaise with the Chairman of FEET and keep Council updated.
2. Email, parishioner – Report of incident along Canal Towpath.
The Clerk presented the content of the email detailing an event where an individual had allegedly verbally abused a parishioner and her granddaughter. Item to be taken into consideration under agenda item 67/21.
3. Letters, parishioner – Copies of exchanges of correspondence relating to safety and flooding issues on the B1101.
The Clerk advised details of correspondence which had been exchanged between a parishioner and various parties including; the local press, Road Safety Audit, Highways Department, FDC. The subject matter concerned the section of the B1101 running between the A1101 and Elm School, highlighting dangers associated with an excessive number of HGV's using the route, speeding vehicles, pedestrian safety and flooding.
Councillors confirmed their shared concern for the issues raised.
4. Email, parishioner – Concern relating to increased traffic passing through Grove estate.
The Clerk presented the content of the letter which included a suggestion for a relief road to be installed from the new development into a farm road lying north of the estate.
Whilst Councillors empathised with the road safety issues arising due to increased traffic, it was acknowledged that the Parish Council had no power to approach the developers concerning the matter.

	<p>For information purposes; The Clerk confirmed that the following information had been uploaded to Council's website and also to the Facebook platform where appropriate.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FDC – Community Safety Information – Danger of loan sharks 2. Cambs CC – Covid-19 update 3. FDC – Details of free Citizens Advice Service available through Covid Community Hub. 4. Galliford Try – A47 Guyhirn works, details of overnight closures (20.00 – 06.00); A141 March Road, Guyhirn – 21 & 22 April, 14 July, 27 July. Guyhirn Roundabout – 23 April. Guyhirn Bridge – 1 May, 1 June. A47 Fen Road/ South Brink – 15 July. 5. Cambs CC – Rapid Covid-19 testing information.
56/21	<p>Planning Applications; F/YR21/0204/TRCA – Felling of 2 x silver birch trees within a conservation area at, The Old Vicarage, Main Road, Elm, PE14 0AB. Council resolved to support the application. F/YR21/0180/F – Single storey side extension to existing dwelling at Sunny View, Low Rd, Elm, PE14 0DD. Council resolved to support the application. F/YR21/0122/F – Single storey extension to rear and new porch to front of existing dwelling at, Field View, 170 Fridaybridge Rd, Elm, PE14 0AU. Council resolved to support the application. In addition to the agenda, the following application was referred to the Planning Committee; F/YR20/0940/F – Change of use of land for use as public house car park involving the formation of hardstanding , new lighting and siting of storage container – Land west of the Sportsman Public House, Main Road, Elm. Council resolved to continue its support for the application on the grounds that The Sportsman Public House was a valuable community amenity. Additionally, the provision of car parking space would relieve parking around the War Memorial and along Main Road. In addition to the agenda; F/YR21/0229/F – 2 storey, 3-bed dwelling involving demolition of outbuilding – Land north of 39 March Rd, Rings End. Council resolved to object to the application on the same grounds as were cited when proposals were refused in September 2020; the development would not conform to the existing pattern of development by virtue of its positioning and scale; the scheme fails to make appropriate provision for private residential amenity space.</p>
57/21	<p>Highways & Footways; Update on outstanding matters;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elm Low Road junction, safety concerns – Due to Covid restrictions, a meeting with the Safety Audit Team was still not possible. It was suggested that bollards could be installed at the junction in order to close off one side of the roadway. Item carried forward to April meeting. • Halfpenny Lane Right of Way (A47 end) – Cllr Feaviour advised that cutting back and flailing had now been completed. As a result, the route was wide enough to allow vehicle access. Thanks conveyed to everyone involved with the effort, it was noted that the present condition needed to be maintained.
58/21	<p>Policies & Procedures – To approve and adopt;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Document Retention Policy (as required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000) Item deferred pending completion of the policy.
59/21	<p>Clerk & Councillor Training; Council resolved to authorise Cllr Ferguson to attend CAPALC 'Chairmanship' training due to be held on 25th May.</p>
60/21	<p>Streetlighting; Garry Edwards (FDC Engineering Manager) had advised that all available testing data had been copied into the FDC spreadsheet, as a result, significant gaps remained. To make progress with proposals to transfer the streetlighting maintenance contract back to FDC, it was resolved to accept in principle a quote of £1240.00 for a physical inspection to be carried out in order to collect the outstanding data. Mr Edwards also recommended that assets (poles & brackets) marked as 'Amber' during the last inspection should now be replaced, additionally, Council should invest as much as possible into converting lamps to LED.</p>
61/21	<p>Canal Towpath – To resolve on measures to be implemented in order to prevent quad bikes accessing the Towpath. Councillors discussed the possibility of installing kissing gates and/or motorcycle inhibitors at the three gateway accesses to the Towpath. It was believed that the cost of the project would be in the region of £2,000. In order to seek the views of Emneth PC, it was agreed that the subject would be raised during a meeting due to be held between representatives from both Councils. The installation of appropriate signage was also discussed.</p>
62/21	<p>Cemetery Chapel – To receive update concerning plans for conversion and resolve appropriately. The Clerk had been made aware of a planning application granted in 1999 which approved a change of use for the Chapel to be used as a Parish meeting room and office. The application was subject to a number of conditions relating to the cemetery access roadway and</p>

	gate. The Clerk confirmed that Council's architect had been made aware of the application to ensure that the conditions could be incorporated into his design proposals.
63/21	To receive requests from Members for items to be included on the next Agenda A query was raised relating why a contractor was taking over responsibility for relocating and re-charging the MVAS. The Clerk explained it was due to risk factors presented by working both at height and also, adjacent to the highway. No agenda item required. The Clerk was reminded that locks at the portacabin needed changing, it was confirmed that the matter was in hand. No agenda item required.
64/21	To resolve on date and format of next meeting It was resolved for Council's next meeting to be held via Zoom at 6.30pm on Thursday 8 April 2021.
65/21	To resolve to enter closed session in order to consider the following agenda items on the grounds of confidentiality. By virtue of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 1 (2) 8.40 pm - It was resolved to enter closed session. Cllr Sutton left the meeting.
66/21	Personnel & Staffing Matters; It was confirmed that Mrs England had satisfactorily completed her probation period. It was resolved to authorise her continued employment as Clerk and RFO to Elm Parish Council. Thanks were conveyed to Mr Gibbs for the work he had undertaken whilst acting as Locum Clerk.
67/21	Legal matters associated with alleged breach of planning legislation; The Clerk provided an update to Members; it was confirmed that a meeting had been scheduled for Monday 15 th March to be attended by representatives from Elm and Emneth Parish Councils in order to discuss and agree on a way forward.
68/21	Canal Towpath incident; Councillors were advised of an incident allegedly involving the removal of logs from the Canal Towpath. The matter was discussed and appropriate action resolved.
69/21	Employment Tribunal 9.10 pm Cllr Butcher left the meeting. The Clerk provided an update to Members, confirming that the matter was now concluded.
70/21	Close of Meeting The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Signed

Elm Parish Council Chairman

Date